Chapter 5 of “Security Capacity and Mass Violence”

Mass Violence in East Java

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**Book Abstract:**

This book examines variations in the form and frequency of mass categorical violence. Why do some areas have greater levels of killings and long-term detentions than others, controlling for the size of the victim group? I argue that the frequency of mass violence is conditioned by the intelligence capacity of security forces. Where security forces have high intelligence capacity, they can limit violence to its intended victims. In contrast, when security forces lack intelligence capacity, they have an incentive to delegate intelligence provision to civilian elites known to be antagonistic to the victim group. These elites can move against local opponents, broadening the targeting criteria of violence and increasing its frequency. Rates of killing are also likely to be higher in areas of low intelligence capacity, as the greater absolute number of detainees places a high cost of care on security forces. Under these conditions, mass executions can become a means of solving this logistical problem. Rates of killing are higher still in areas where civilian elites have high mobilization capacity, as they can then wield violence independently. Lacking access to detention facilities, this makes lethal violence more likely than incarceration. The majority of this book uses process tracing to observe the mechanisms underlying this argument in three provinces that experienced mass categorical violence during the 1965-66 Indonesian Mass Killings: West Java, Central Java, and East Java. An additional chapter examines this phenomena cross-nationally, examining how security force fragmentation and the use of civilians conditions the frequency of mass violence.

**Chapter Abstract:**

This chapter traces how mass categorical violence unfolded in East Java, a province in which security forces had low intelligence capacity and the mobilizational capacity of civilian elites was high. Once the decision to engage in mass violence was made by military headquarters in Jakarta, the East Java division lacked sufficient intelligence on communist party (PKI) supporters in the province to engage in mass violence unilaterally. The East Java command was also slow to act, effectively placing the decision to use violence in the hands of both local commanders and civilian elites for the first several weeks of violence. In some areas, civilian elites, especially those in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), seized this opportunity to mobilize followers to engage in violence unilaterally. Even after violence became centralized under the army, the military’s lack of intelligence capacity and need for manpower, combined with the strength of NU, produced high levels of violence and high rates of killing. Like Central Java, a need to alleviate the cost of caring for large numbers of detainees raised rates of killing, as did unilateral attacks and pressure by NU elites.
Chapter 5: Mass Violence in East Java

I met “Budi” in a small village in Mojokerto Regency, a district of East Java approximately 50km Southwest of the provincial capital of Surabaya. We had been introduced by a man whose father had been disappeared during the 1965-66 Indonesian Killings, in which the Indonesian Army and its civilian allies killed an estimated half million communist party supporters (Cribb 1990:12). Budi was himself a victim of this violence. A former member of Pemuda Rakyat, the youth organization affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), he had been kidnapped by youth affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the main Islamic organization in East Java and the principal civilian political rival of the PKI. After being held for a day in the home of an NU member, he was taken along with two others to a remote area, where NU youth sliced his leg and throat with sickles. Left for dead, Budi was nearly one of an estimated 180,000-200,000 individuals killed in East Java over roughly 6 months in 1965-66 (Kammen and Zakaria 2012:452).

The killings did not unfold in the same way, or with similar levels of violence and killing, across Indonesia. In the neighboring province of Central Java, rates of killing were roughly half that of East Java, despite a similar number of people being victims of violence (long term incarceration or killing). Two provinces west, in West Java, rates of killing were eightfold less than East Java, and the province had only a quarter of the violence that occurred in Central or East Java, relative to the numbers of communist party supporters in each province. Why do security forces and their allies target members of an identified population group more frequently in some areas than others during mass categorical violence? And when is this violence more likely to be lethal?

In this book I derive an original theory to explain variation in the form and frequency of mass categorical violence within a state undergoing such violence. I argue the frequency of state violence is conditioned the intelligence capacity of state security forces. Like other instances in which armed groups seek to deploy violence selectively, implementing mass categorical violence requires substantial private information to limit the use of force against those to which it was initially intended (Greitens, 2016; Kalyvas, 2006). Security forces must separate and frequently screen an intended subset of a broader population group, and frequently must do so without the aid of detailed census information or visual indicators of collective identity. Security forces are only able to collect sufficient private information when they have high intelligence capacity. When security forces lack this, they have an incentive to rely upon local civilian elites to provide the necessary information to implement mass categorical violence successfully. When so empowered, these elites can use their ability to provide information to widen the targeting criteria of security forces. As security forces cannot properly assess this information, empowering civilian elites to provide intelligence increases the frequency of state violence provided targeting overlaps with pre-existing political cleavages (see also Balcells 2017).\footnote{For a longer discussion, see Winward 2020}

I argue that rates of killing specifically are conditioned by two factors. First, building on studies of prisoners of war, I also argue that intelligence capacity conditions rates of killing (see Jones 2008; Winward 2020). Non-lethal forms of state violence such as mass incarceration require significant resources: prison facilities, foodstuffs for detainees, and guards. Weak intelligence capacity is likely to lead to larger numbers of detainees more generally, increasing the net cost of incarceration. In these conditions security forces often face severe costs when it comes to feeding and housing prisoners. In such conditions, mass executions can become an attractive means of “solving” this logistical problem.

Second, I argue that violence likely to be higher still when civilian elites have greater abilities to mobilize followers to use violence directly against their perceived opponents. When civilian elites antagonistic to
the group being targeted for violence are both well-coordinated and have access to their own source of organized violence at the local level, they can increase rates of killing. They do this by encouraging militia under their influence to unilaterally engage in lethal violence, and by using the threat of this to pressure local security force commanders to raise rates of killing. This is most likely to occur where previous political competition had been especially fierce, and when local elites fear future marginalization at the hands of the group being targeted for violence. Violence by civilian militia are more likely to be specifically lethal, as unlike professional security forces, they do not have access to detention facilities that enable incarceration as a violent strategy (Mitchell et al. 2014). However, civilians only have the capability to significantly raise rates of killings in this manner when local security forces are relatively weak. Weak security forces are unable to fully reign in militia intent on eliminating their local opponents. In contrast, when security forces are locally powerful, they are able to restrain militia from engaging in excessive violence outside the greater campaign of violence planned by its architects.

In this chapter I examine mass categorical violence in East Java, a province with both low intelligence capacity and in which elites could more easily mobilize followers for violence outside military control. As was the case in Central Java, in East Java security forces lacked intelligence capacity. The provincial army division (Brawijaya division) was late to create village level deployments, and those village deployments lacked the ability to even screen village guards for communist party (PKI) sympathizers (Sundhaussen 1982:173). There were also concerns that sections of the Brawijaya division itself were communist sympathizers (“Report from East Java” 1986). The Brawijaya also had a number of units deployed outside the province at the time mass violence began, and the Brawijaya commander was initially reluctant to coordinate the entirety of the division to move against the PKI (Crouch 1978:143). These factors meant that the army high command lacked a reliable source of coordinated manpower within the Brawijaya division itself. Like Central Java, this incentivized first sub-national Brawijaya officers, and eventually the entire division, to turn to civilian elites and their respective networks for intelligence and manpower. Also, like Central Java, empowering this collaborator network – especially the Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) led to high levels of violence in East Java. For reasons of prison overcrowding and torture, this lack of intelligence capacity also raised rates of killing in East Java.

Unlike Central Java, in East Java civilian elites were capable of mobilizing for violence independently of the Brawijaya division. This is for two reasons. First, these elites were drawn almost entirely from a single sociopolitical organization: Nahdlatul Ulama. This meant that elites could better coordinate their actions. Second, NU had developed a large and well-trained militia known as Banser. Banser was formed specifically to combat the communist party as it grew in strength in East Java. Because elites were relatively united and had access to a well-trained and battle tested militia, it could occasionally challenge the primacy of the army at the local level, and engage in violence unilaterally.

The mobilizational capacity of civilian elites in in East Java raised rates of killing compared to Central Java, even though the overall levels of violence (killings + long term detentions) were similar. The strength of civilian elites allowed them to be aggressive in moving against communist party supporters, and in some areas mount their own lethal campaigns of violence outside the auspices of the army. At times, this occurred despite attempts by the army to reign civilian militia in. These actions led to the deaths of individuals who in Central Java would have instead been incarcerated. NU leaders were also active in pressuring local commanders to execute more detainees. Both these activities raised levels of

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killings in East Java relative to detentions. This combination of security entrenchment, mobilizational capacity and violent outcomes can be seen in Table 5.1, below.

### Table 5.1: Mass Violence in East Java

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Violence</th>
<th>High Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Low</td>
<td>High (8.50-9.24% of PKI pool)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Medium</td>
<td>Medium (7.76% of PKI pool)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Low</td>
<td>Low rates of killing:detention (2:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>Medium rates of killing:detention (1:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Case: East Java</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case: Central Java</td>
<td>Case: West Java</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Violence</td>
<td>Low rates of killing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Case: n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Lev 1966:93-97; Kammen and Zakaria 2012:452

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I provide a brief review of the methods and data used in both the book and this chapter. Second, I overview the politics in East Java prior to the September 30th Movement: a failed purge of the military high command by dissident junior officers and parts of PKI leadership that was used as justification to crush the PKI, then the largest civilian political party in the country (see Roosa 2006). I draw attention to security forces’ lack of intelligence capacity, the mobilizational capacity of civilian elites, and the tension between these elites and the PKI that resulted in NU forming a large and well trained militia that it would be willing to use once the opportunity arose. In the next two sections, I trace how violence unfolded across East Java: an initial wave of militia violence, followed by a more coordinated campaign of arrests, detention, and often execution. In these sections I show how a lack of intelligence capacity led to higher levels of repressive violence, as it encouraged them to delegate intelligence collection and the use of force to civilians. In the fifth section I examine rates of killing in East Java, arguing that a combination of the inability to provide food and shelter for the burgeoning detainee population combined with unilateral militia attacks and pressure from civilian elites to raise executions led to high rates of killing in East Java.

### Methods and Data

I use process tracing to show how intelligence capacity and mobilizational capacity conditions both the frequency of state violence and rates of killing. Process tracing uses detailed within-case analysis to show how a hypothesized causal process plays out, and has three core components: theorization about causal mechanisms, the analysis of observable manifestations of these mechanisms, and the complementary use of comparative methods to help generalize findings (Beach 2017). I have outlined my theorized causal process and mechanisms above. In this chapter, I trace how mass violence unfolded in the Indonesian province of East Java in 1965-66. As my causal process starts with the decision of security forces to implement mass-categorical violence, I begin my process tracing in October 1965, when this decision is made. In areas of low intelligence capacity, we would expect security forces to
approach local civilian elites for information. Possible evidence of this would be coordinated rallies with security forces and civilians, or orders for troops to utilize civilians in this manner. We would also expect to find former elites, or those close to them, who would divulge such soliciting of information when interviewed. If civilian elites widened the targeting criteria we would expect to see greater levels of violence when opponents of the targeted group are strong. We might also find interview evidence as to how denunciation was organized that differs from the targeting criteria of security forces. We may also find survivors of state violence that do not conform to the intended targeting criteria. At this point in the causal process, we should expect to see evidence of the logistical problem: massive numbers of prisoners, along with difficulties screening and caring for them. We might also find evidence of torture—one of the mechanisms in this causal process linking low intelligence capacity to killings.

The final mechanism linking intelligence capacity to higher rates of killing, security forces using mass executions to alleviate cost of care, is the most difficult to collect direct evidence of. Still, we might find evidence of the justification for executions in interviews or archival sources. For the role of mobilization capacity and militia raising rates of killing, we may find archival or witness statements of militias operating on their own, or of incidents where security forces clash or attempt to disarm militia. We may also have accounts of direct militia killings outside the process of detention and mass execution that characterized much of the violence (Robinson 2018). In this chapter, I rely on a combination of archival materials, secondary sources, and a series of interviews and focus groups I conducted in East Java in 2016. Respondents included former political prisoners, witnesses, and militia members in Yogyakarta, Jombang, Mojokerto, and Surabaya. Archival sources include recently declassified telegrams from the US embassy in Jakarta and consulate in Surabaya, as well as NU communication from this period published by Fealy and McGregor (2012), and East Java military communications recently published by Grace Leksana (2020).

East Java Prior to Mass Violence

Like Central Java, East Java was a major bastion of PKI support prior to the 1965-66 politicide. In the 1955 elections the PKI was able to secure approximately 2.3 million votes (23.2 percent of total), enough for second place. The PKI trailed only Nahdlatul Ulama, the dominant political party in the province, who claimed 34.1 percent of the vote (Feith 1957:66). By the 1957 regional elections the gap between the PKI and NU had closed considerably: the PKI secured 35.6% of the popular vote compared to NU’s 39.4%. In both proportionate and absolute terms, PKI support was near identical in both Central Java and East Java. Not only was the PKI able to attract votes, but like Central Java, its trade union (SOBSI) was a major player in East Java industry, and all of the peasant front BTI, women’s organization Gerwani, and artist association LEKRA had substantial followings. Like Central Java, in East Java PKI support was drawn from a mix of farmers, workers, artisans, and intellectuals. PKI supporters also tended to be less religiously devout than supporters of the Muslim political parties such as NU, and in the aggregate, likely of lower socioeconomic status (Hefner 2000:52-53). The PKI was also one of the only political parties to build significant party infrastructure at the village level – signing up workers and farmers in its major associations, advocating for peasant issues such as land redistribution, corrupt landlords, and sharecropper rights (see also Mortimer 1974). In doing so, the PKI challenged long-standing social structures, as well as the authority of East Javanese landowners and religious elites (a category that frequently overlapped).

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3 In Central Java the PKI received just over 2.3 million votes in the 1955 elections (25.8% of total), while in the 1957 elections the PKI received approximately 2.7 million votes (35.6% of total). In absolute terms, the PKI received just over 2.7 million votes in East Java. The population of the two provinces is also extremely similar (Feith 1957:66; Lev 1966:93-94).
Mobilization Capacity in East Java

Mobilization capacity in East Java was high. This was due to a combination of civilian elites being concentrated within a single organization, and that organization having access to a large and well-trained militia. This meant that elites had the ability to coordinate violent actions across large swathes of East Java. By the time mass violence occurred, elites could engage in violence unilaterally and pressure commanders to increase killing. The ability of elites to coordinate such violent activity was due to both the organizational structure of its principle organization – Nahdlatul Ulama – and the fierce competition between NU and the PKI in the years leading to politicide. This incentivized the creation of a dedicated militia, and the political turn against the PKI provided an opportunity to deploy it in force.

Unlike Central Java, the civilian elites in East Java were largely members of a single organization: Nahdlatul Ulama. NU was the largest religious organization in East Java and its largest political party. Organizationally, a major advantage held by NU was its dense network of pesantren (religious boarding schools), as well as the local political and spiritual authority of the kiai (heads of pesantren), who themselves were linked in dense institutional and kinship networks (Fealy 1998; Dhofer 1999). The authority of the kiai amongst their students during this period was enormous. Fealy and McGregor describe the relationship of the kiai to students as one in which a “kiai’s word was writ among his students and supporters” (2012:107). In addition, kiai and their networks of followers were often dominant economic players in the countryside: pesantren often owned large tracts of land, and the religiously conservative Muslims from which NU is primarily drawn tended to be wealthier than their less religiously devout neighbors (Hefner 2000:52-53). East Java was both the province with the greatest NU presence and the site of some of its largest and most important pesantren such as Lirboyo (in Kediri) and Tebuireng (Jombang).

Not only could NU’s electoral party compete with the PKI, but as a sociopolitical organization, NU also had youth and student groups to attract mass support and membership at the local level much in the same way as the PKI did with its mass organizations.

As the PKI continued to grow in strength, they increasingly challenged the material and social status quo in East Java. One such challenge was a propaganda campaign directed at the “Tujuh Setan Desa” (Seven Village Devils). The seven devils targeted by the PKI were landlords, usurers, advance purchasers of crops (penebas), middlemen, capitalist bureaucrats, rural bandits, and evil traders. PKI activists singled out these categories at rallies and performances as a means of denouncing local opponents. In East Java, kiai at times became targets of the campaign due to their large landholdings, and the label of setan applied to a kiai was particularly offensive. The seven village devil campaign also included a strong cultural component provided by Lekra, such as public performances of wayang kulit (shadow puppet) or ludruk (plays) with such provocative titles as “the death of God”. Many within the religious community saw this performance as a direct attack on Islam, even though they rarely witnessed it (Sulistyo 1997:314).

The PKI’s attempts to implement land redistribution also had significant repercussions in East Java. At the national level the PKI was successful in advocating for changes to sharecropping laws and land redistribution laws in 1960 and 1961. If fully implemented, these changes could have re-distributed lands belonging to NU supporters to members of the poorer peasantry. While religious institutions were technically exempt from land reform, this did not prevent the PKI and its affiliated organizations from agitating against NU and its pesantren as violators of the land reform act (see Mortimer 1974). If the PKI were successful in these agitations, NU would suffer significant material losses.

In response to the growing strength of the PKI and its challenges to the status quo, NU formed a militia known as Banser in 1962. Drawn from their youth group Ansor. Banser functioned as a paramilitary
body that would defend pesantren interests from the PKI (Fealy and McGregor 2012:113). Kiai had a wellspring of able recruits: in the pesantren physical tests of strength were a major component of spiritual training, and many kiai themselves were believed to possess supernatural powers. Students regularly engaged in martial arts and games of soccer with a flaming ball made of coconut husk. This emphasis on physical prowess stemmed from the idea that one could “[measure] the degree of someone's total submission to Allah by his ability to resist or repel physical threats, such as stabblings” (Sulistyo 1997:121). Emphasizing physical prowess and the ability to physically confront opponents of Islam provided NU leaders with an enormous reserve of physically fit youth with at least some degree of self-defense training.

In addition to being able to draw on a wealth of potential militia recruits, kiai also ensured close lines of communication across pesantren to coordinate activities in the face of potential PKI aggression. Pesantren in Jombang and Kediri, for example, had a dedicated courier service between boarding schools, with pre-written notes prepared to call for assistance from other schools. Kiai ensured that there was always vehicles on standby to request help if required.4 These networks often extended substantial distance. The networks in Jombang, for example, extended to the neighbouring regencies of Kediri, Blitar, and Mojokerto.5 Given that larger pesantren had thousands of students, kiai in East Java had the means to rapidly coordinate huge numbers of youth militia at short notice, giving them a substantive force advantage over the PKI, and, at times, local army commanders.

These militia groups also gained experience in using violence prior to 1965. By 1963, the PKI sought to unilaterally implement the land reform acts by leading land seizures and occupations. In these unilateral actions (aksi sepihak) farmers associated with the BTI, alongside members of the PKI and the communist youth wing Pemuda Rakyat occupied the lands of large landholders whom they believed to be violating the terms of the 1960 sharecropping law. In East Java many of these landholding belonged to NU members or pesantren. By 1964, violence during aksi between NU and PKI supporters became frequent, as NU deployed Ansor youth and the Banser militia to disperse the occupations. The worst of this violence occurred in Kediri, Banyuwangi, Jember, and Jombang: all areas in which both the PKI and NU had high levels of support (Fealy and McGregor 2012:112). Due to their force and coordination advantages, NU was generally able to repel aksi. These physical clashes resulted in substantive injury, and at times loss of life.

An example of such a lethal aksi occurred in the village of Njati Pandak, in northern Jombang. There, an aksi was led by a PKI member named Matar. After he and a collection of PKI and BTI members seized fields owned by a local NU member, Ansor and Banser members arrived in force to drive off the communist supporters. NU youth drove the occupiers off the fields, after which they followed Matar to his home, surrounded it and set it ablaze. As Matar ran from the fire he was beaten to death. Despite the spectacular nature of the attack – arson and a public execution, police did not investigate the murder.6 Even though the PKI officially ended its program of aksi in 1964, low level violence continued in some areas of East Java.

The Armed Forces in East Java

The Brawijaya Division had poor intelligence capacity. Due to intra-service rivalries – and a lack of funds - the Brawijaya was slow to implement regional (Korem), district (Kodim), sub-district (Koramil) and

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4 Confidential interview 034 with witness and kiai by author, Jombang, April 2016.
5 Ibid.
6 Confidential interview 027 with former political prisoner by author, Yogyakarta, March 2016; Confidential interview 034 with witness and kiai by author, Jombang, April 2016.
village commands (OKD). Korem were not established until October 1963, and the process incomplete until at least mid 1966 (Leksana 2020:10). Even once OKD were established, there was a belief that there were perceived communist sympathizers within the Brawijaya division and that the OKD were incapable of properly screening its village guard units to remove PKI supporters prior to 1965 (Sundhaussen 1982:173). Moreover, at least half of the Brawijaya battalions had been deployed outside of the province for the Malaysia campaign and to repress revolts in Sulawesi, leaving the division “seriously under-manned until well into November [1965]” (Jenkins and Kammen 2012:97; see also Robinson 2018:151). This further disrupted the intelligence capacity of the Brawijaya and left them crucially undermanned in the months leading up to the 1965 killings. The funds needed for the Malaysia campaign also precluded the development of civic action programs by the military in East Java, depriving the army of an additional avenue of building reliable local intelligence (Sundhaussen 1982:173).

The main role of the armed forces in East Java amidst rising tensions between the PKI and NU was to try to prevent violence from escalating – a task in which they were only partially successful. As discussed above, low level violence was not uncommon in some areas, and during aksi, it could be explosive. At the same time, the Army generally attempted to contain these outbreaks. In Jombang, for instance, following the murder of Matari, the Brawijaya deployed in force at the funeral to dissuade violence from either side. Part of the reason for the Army’s success in containing violence after aksi is likely due to NU not engaging in a coordinated effort to wield sustained violence against the PKI. At this point, coordinated NU actions appear to have been largely limited to defending aksi, and there is no evidence that NU actively coordinated an offensive drive to kill communist party supporters.

The Security Situation Following the September 30th Movement

Unlike Central Java, there was no widespread support for the September 30th Movement among Brawijaya officers. Neither the Brawijaya headquarters nor any of the sub-provincial commands declared in favour of the movement (Crouch 1978:143). However, the Brawijaya still lacked intelligence capacity and manpower in East Java. This would force the Brawijaya to turn outside their organizational structure to obtain these if they chose to move against the PKI in East Java. This lack of intelligence capacity and manpower was for three reasons. First, as in Central Java, a large number of East Java troops were deployed outside of province. At least eight of the province’s sixteen battalions had been deployed outside the province prior to October 1965. This left the Brawijaya severely understaffed as it came to implement mass violence in a province of approximately 22 million (Widjojo 1970:174). Not only would this reduce the amount of troops to physically arrest communist party supporters, it also disrupted local intelligence ties, as large numbers of locally recruited troops were no longer available to provide information on the areas from which they were drawn. Moreover, it also weakened the army vis-à-vis the civilian elites, especially in the first phase of violence.

Second, loyal members of Brawijaya intelligence and the Army high command saw some sections of the Brawijaya Division as compromised. This led to both further intelligence-disrupting redeployments and suspicion that the intelligence branch and various battalions were not moving fully against the PKI. A report compiled by an intelligence officer in East Java in November 1965 claims that “up to 30 percent [of the army East Java] were ‘involved’ in the coup” (“Report from East Java” 1986:146). The report claimed that village-level commands tended to be infiltrated with the PKI, causing intelligence leaks that would obstruct the arrest process. In addition, Battalions 511, 512, and 513 were suspected to have been strongly infiltrated with communist sympathizers. All of these battalions were subsequently deployed out of province (Ibid 147).

7 Confidential interview 034 with witness and kiai by author, Jombang, April 2016.
8 Note that some of these redeployments occurred prior to October 1965.
section were dismissed due to perceived communist sympathies, leaving the intelligence staff severely understaffed. These factors further hindered the ability of the Brawijaya to collect reliable intelligence on the PKI, incentivizing the remaining loyal troops to turn outside their organizational infrastructure for information on the PKI.

Third, Brawijaya leadership was slow to take actions against the wishes of President Sukarno, precluding coordinated action by the Brawijaya as a whole (Crouch 1978:143). While nominally anti-communist, Brawijaya commander Basuki Rachmat was also a supporter of President Sukarno and reluctant to openly challenge the president. Sukarno frequently called for calm and decried the persecution of the communist party, leading to a situation in which the Brawijaya headquarters initially ignored requests from the Army high command to purge the PKI (Kammen and Zakaria 2012:446). Even in mid-October, when Brawijaya command began to take action, it issued a set of instructions to Kodim to cooperate with local police forces in their investigation of Gerwani and Pemuda Rakyat members.

In practice, this meant that the decision to move in force against the communist party often fell to local officers. This downstreaming of authority to move against the communist party hindered the initial ability of anti-communist Brawijaya troops to coordinate their activities over large areas. Not only did this encourage relying on civilians for manpower, but it also weakened the position of the Army vis-à-vis civilian elites. Even once Brigadier General Sunariyadi replaced Basuki Rachmat as Brawijaya commander in November 1965 and was willing to coordinate the entirety of the division to crush the PKI, disruptions to the intelligence gathering capacity of the Brawijaya Division due to dismissals in the intelligence branch and troop redeployments ensured that the Army would have to continue to rely upon civilian actors for intelligence and auxiliary troops.

Civilian Reactions to the September 30th Movement

Unlike Central Java, in East Java civilian elites mobilized followers for violence prior to direct training and supervision by military forces – and at times against their wishes. In the first week of October the NU national leadership in Jakarta began to mobilize its branches in East Java to violently crush the communist party. On October 5 the NU national radio broadcast denounced the September 30th Movement, and called for the PKI to be banned (Fealy and McGregor 2012:117). This announcement was approved by Suharto (see Sulastomo 2006). NU quickly escalated its rhetoric against the PKI, and in doing so, instructed its membership to engage in protests and attacks against the PKI. Following the October 5th broadcast from NU headquarters in Jakarta, East Java Central Board instructions framed the September 30th Movement as a continuation of the 1948 Madiun Affair, in which communist militia massacred members of the Islamic community. By October 9th the NU Central Branch in East Java issued instructions to its membership – including its militia – to move, using “terms such as menumpas (eradicate), menghabiskan (finish off), mengganyang (crush), gobble up) and mengikis habis (eliminate) in describing what should be done to the PKI.” In addition, anyone who fell in battle against the PKI would be declared a martyr.

Just after these instructions were issued from the East Java Central Board, Ansor members attacked several suspected PKI members in Kertosono district, bordering Kediri and Jombang. Ansor members

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9 Telegram 187 from American Consulate Surabaya to American Embassy Jakarta, 'Joint sitrep 19'
beat accused communists and tore down their homes. Protests by NU branches began at the same
time. Around October 9 students of Tebuireng in Jombang gathered outside the pesantren to protest
against the PKI. Armed with industrial chains, the students proceeded to the local SOBSI headquarters,
and after setting the building alight, used the chains to topple the building. On October 16th an NU-led
protest in Surabaya damaged the PKI office, leading security forces to arrest 200 NU members (Fealy
and McGregor 2012:117). Protests, and sometimes local campaigns of violence spread across NU
branches in East Java.

Mass Violence in East Java – the first phase

Mass Violence in East Java did not have an initially coordinated anti-communist campaign or clear start
date in the same manner as Central Java or West Java. Whereas in Central Java violence began with the
arrival of the RPKAD, the Brawijaya commander, Basuki Rachmat, was initially reluctant to act against
the PKI. This meant that for the first phase of mass violence in East Java, lasting for at least the first
three weeks of October, the decision to act against the PKI was left in the hands of more junior
commanders. This led to varying situations in which any combination of nothing, arrests by the military,
anti-communist violence by civilian groups, or joint civilian-military operations could occur. In instances
in which civilians were involved, they tended to raise levels of violence, and at times, killing.

Where local commanders were unwilling to move against the communist party and in which NU was
strong, civilian elites sometimes moved against the PKI unilaterally, leading to increased rates of killing.
During the first few weeks of politicide in some rural areas of Mojokerto, for example, local NU branches
identified, arrested, screened, and executed suspected communists without the army. Large groups of
Ansor members would arrive at villages, and arrest those believed to be members of organizations such
as PKI, BTI, and Pemuda Rakyat. Those arrested would be taken to a makeshift detention center, such as
the home of a prominent NU member. There, they would be held for a short time before being taken to
a secluded area for execution by a handful of Ansor members. One Pemuda Rakyat member who
miraculously survived having his throat slashed by an Ansor execution squad recalled that there were no
soldiers present during the arrest or brief detainment, and that Ansor groups arrived on foot rather than
truck. Militia-led violence in Mojokerto was evidently so severe that both security forces and other
civilian groups were afraid of removing the headless corpses that were strewn by riverbanks or the sides
of the road (“Report from East Java” 1986:141). Something that would have facilitated this violence was
the degree of elite coordination: Mojokerto was a regency connected to the courier system discussed
earlier, ensuring local NU branches could deploy huge numbers of militia. Moreover, the regencies
connected in this system – Kediri, Jombang, and Mojokerto, all experienced some of the highest levels
of violence in East Java (see Chandra 2017:1066-1072). In addition, lack of access to a dedicated prison
system meant that there was no option for prolonged incarceration, making killing a more likely
outcome.

In other areas, local Army commanders coordinated anti-communist sweeps alongside civilian
organizations, especially NU, leading to high levels of repressive violence. The first of these occurred
around October 10. At that time, NU branches in Kediri planned, with the assistance and permission of
local military forces, a mass rally to be held in Kediri city on October 13. Much like the rallies that
occurred in Central Java with the arrival of the RPKAD, the Kediri rally culminated with an attack on the
local PKI headquarters in which the building was burned to the ground and eleven PKI members were
killed (Sulistyo 1997:182 Young 1990:80). Arrests in the Kediri area involving coordinated actions

12 Confidential interview 027 with former political prisoner by author, Yogyakarta, March 2016
13 As will be discussed below, the deployment of Ansor and Banser units via truck was generally a hallmark of NU-
army coordination.
between religious youth and army personnel began not long after. Similar rallies occurred across numerous towns in East Java when local commanders decided to move against the communist party. These kinds of unilateral militia attacks or joint-operations led to the targeting of those who would have fallen far outside the desired targets of communist leaders and activists.

For militia such as Banser, the prime factors determining if and when they became active in moving against the communist party was the initiative of local religious leaders such as kiai. As discussed earlier, at the time of politicide, a kiai’s authority over their pupils was absolute. Actions only occurred after first receiving the blessing of the most important local kiai and Ulama (eg: Kuniawan et al. 2015:11). In areas characterized by joint army-civilian action, such religious figures would receive assurances from local security forces – either asking or being asked to act – in order to ensure that their actions would not be repressed by the military (see Sulisty 1997:180-187; Kuniawan et al. 2015:14, 18). In many locations close contact between local kiai, who would have had the authority to mobilize and direct Ansor and Banser groups, and local commanders appears to have happened almost immediately following Untung’s broadcast announcing the September 30th Movement (see Sulisty 1997:181-184). Anti-communist local commanders and hard-liners within local nationalist and religious organizations had often already developed close ties in the face of perceived communist strength. However, religious elites were still sometimes willing to sanction this kind of violence even if there was a threat of repression from security forces. The dense network structure of the pesantren of which the kiai stood at the center allowed each to mobilize huge numbers of students, making such mobilizations capable of resisting or dissuading attempts to repress by local commanders who wished to remain inactive during the first weeks of politicide in East Java. For example, Ansor and Banser groups were active in Jombang, despite local soldiers occasionally attempting to disband these groups and confiscate their makeshift weapons.15

In late October Brawijaya headquarters took a number of initiatives to coordinate violence across all of East Java and attempt to bring all civilian militia under the security umbrella of the Army following weeks of pressure from Jakarta. According to military archival materials recently published by Grace Leksana, on October 21, Rachmat began Pancasila Operation ordering “all Kodam VIII/Brawijaya […] to continue the extermination of th remaining contra revolutionary 30 September Movement down to its roots and create peace and order in East Java” (Leksana 2020:17)16 The orders also explicitly encouraged using civilians: “for the purpose of the operation, local civilian forces that clearly expre ssed their support for the army can be used in eliminating September 30th Movement.”17 Around the same time the Army attempted to coordinate existing civilian militia by helping to establish a civilian action command to crush the PKI (KAP-Gestapo) in East Java. This command was intended to coordinate between civilian groups, and to ensure that they themselves were coordinating with the Army in order to prevent violence from occurring outside the army chain of command (see “Report from East Java” 1986:136). Not long after, Brigadier General Sunariyadi replaced Basuki Rachmat as commander of the Brawijaya. Unlike Rachmat, Sunariyadi was seen as willing to forcibly move against the PKI in the province. Around the same time Brawijaya Battalions 517 and 518 arrived in East Java from Kalimantan, providing further troops for Sunariyadi to coordinate joint operations between civilians and the army. This marked the

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14 Confidential interview 034 with witness and kiai by author, Jombang, April 2016.
15 Confidential interview 027 with former political prisoner by author, Yogyakarta, March 2016
17 Ibid 4
start of the second phase of violence, in which the dominant form of mass violence across East Java was of joint operations.

**Mass Violence in East Java – the second phase**

Once General Sunariyadi replaced Basuki Rachmat as Brawijaya commander and Battalions 517 and 518 returned to East Java, mass violence in East Java was largely characterized by joint civil-military operations. Despite the arrival of additional troops, the Brawijaya Division still lacked both the capability to collect the required intelligence or deploy sufficient manpower to implement mass violence unilaterally. These shortcomings meant that the Brawijaya division would continue to outsource parts of both intelligence collection and the use of force to civilian elites. For their part, civilian elites provided auxiliary manpower via their existing militia; and provided information in the form of denunciations and identifying suspected communists during sweeps. The army’s reliance on collaborators for intelligence and manpower led to similar levels of mass violence in East Java as in Central Java – though as I argue in the next section, the increased strength of civilian elites led to higher rates of killing in East Java than Central Java.

Like Central Java, the Army approached civilian organizations known to be antagonistic to the communist party for information and manpower. As discussed above, NU the most potent source of civilian support to whom the Army could turn. Civilians were able to identify suspected communists in two primary ways. First, individuals or religious organizations could denounce suspected communists directly to local military commands (Korem, Kodim, or Koramil). Second, civilian militia could identify victims themselves during patrols or other operations. These means of intelligence provision drastically increased the frequency of violence in East Java and suggests that while the Army was ultimately responsible unleashing much of the violence, they were only partially able to control its scale. In this section I focus primarily on mass violence in the aggregate (both detentions and killings), and address rates of killings specifically in the following section. Before doing so, I briefly summarize the second phase of politicide in East Java.

**Dynamics of the Second Politicide Phase in East Java**

The most common pattern of the second phase of mass violence in East Java was joint operations between Army forces and those of NU’s youth groups Ansor and Banser. Oftentimes, this would involve a combination of army troops and militia going house to house in neighborhoods and villages, armed with lists of potential PKI supporters. Frequently names on these lists would be generated by civilian organizations themselves. Once the combination of soldiers and militia arrived at a location, they would arrest those whose names were on the list, and occasionally others who were residing at the same location (Kurniawan et al. 2015:10-45). Like Central Java, detainees would often be taken to one of the many official or makeshift detention centers across the province for screening and interrogation. In some instances, suspected communists were killed in deserted areas without processing at detention facilities (See Tempo, Oct 7, 2012:31). However, many victims appear to have first been detained for some period of time before execution (Sunyoto et al. 1996:156; Sulistyo 1997:186; Kurniawan et al. 2015:10-48; see also Roosa 2016:19; Robinson 2018).

Even in instances in which anti-communist operations visibly included only civilian elements, they often did so with the consent and support of local army units. It was common practice in East Java for local military commands (Kodim) to distribute lists of suspected communists to religious organizations and their respective youth wings for capture or execution (Robinson 2018:155). Civilians were instrumental in helping to place names on these lists (Hefner 2000:47). In some cases, lists themselves carried instructions as to who on the list was to be killed, in others, the decision whether to kill or not was left in
the hands of anti-communist organizations or militias themselves (Tempo, Oct 7, 2012:31-35). At times these killings were immediate: in or just outside the home.\(^{18}\) In others, victims were taken to a secluded location such as a river before being killed and their bodies dumped. Ansor units would often arrive by trucks, some of which were provided by the military.

**Denunciation**

The opportunity for civilians to denounce suspected communists made it possible for them to use the military campaign of mass violence to eliminate their local political competition and potential threats to status quo, and by doing so, expand the circle of those targeted from party leaders and activists to those with only peripheral ties to the party. Like Central Java, civilian organizations would provide lists of communist party supporters to the army. In Jombang, civilian fronts in the area had teams actively dedicated to drafting these lists. NU elites were especially important in coordinating denunciations on a large scale: *kiai* would gather village youth together, using them to identify suspected communists in their respective villages (Tempo 2012:33). The practice of using mass organizations to identify communist supporters appears to have been widespread. An intelligence report from East Java claims that in Bondowoso: “The community, especially the Religious groups, were very active in reporting PKI elements to those in authority, who would then take action” (“Report from East Java” 1986:138). The report lists that similar actions by what it refers to as “the people” occurred in numerous other regencies, including Jember, Jombang, Mojokerto, Kediri, Malang, and Madiun (Ibid: 138-142). By late November the Army issued further instructions regarding the use of civilians to provide information, directing Brawijaya officers to “[form] teams to register residents at the level of village neighbourhood, village, sub-district, district or regents, national companies, private companies, universities, and so on in order to dismiss PKI internally,” and to have civilians be involved with “providing information” and “conducting operations together with [the Army].”\(^{19}\)

Relying on civilian organizations for intelligence could lead to high rates of denunciation, especially in areas in which organizations such as NU had intense local rivalries with the PKI. One example of this can be seen in the case of Darul Ulum Pesantren in Jombang. Prior to the anti-communist purge, there were several low-level clashes and provocation between Darul Ulum staff, students, and broader religious community on one hand, and supporters of the communist party and BTI on the other. The situation was so polarized prior to the September 30\(^{th}\) Movement that Darul Ulum students were forbidden to travel to “red” areas unless they were in a group of no less than five, and unless they had some form of weapon.\(^{20}\) Once the anti-communist campaign spread to Jombang, a large number of low-level communist supporters and their families took refuge in the pesantren in fear of becoming targets of the politicide. When soldiers at the school asked their identity, they were turned over en-masse to the army.\(^{21}\) Vanessa Hearman also notes that in Karang Duren, Bangil, PNI and Ansor members created their own screening teams before handing in suspected communists to the army (2012:119). Both factors suggest that the military was not necessarily able to limit violence to its intended victims. That violence tended to be higher in areas where NU was strongest, as opposed to where the PKI was most numerous, underscores this phenomenon (see Chandra 2017:1066-1072).

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18 Confidential interview 042 with witness and former Lekra member by author, Jombang, May 2016.
20 Confidential interview 034 with witness and *kiai* by author, Jombang, April 2016.
21 Ibid


*Militia Actions*

A second means through which civilians could provide information was for civilian militias to solicit it directly over the course of anti-communist operations. An interview with a former Ansor member by Vanessa Hearman recounts:

> Ansor began to move by asking for information from friends who knew precisely if [someone] was PKI. There were [PKI] in each village. [We would ask] “(Are they?) PKI or not? No. Ok.” We received information directly from each area. That was the way it was, so that we wouldn’t make a mistake. Because every area would know precisely the make up of its community and organisations.\(^{22}\)

This type of autonomy gave Ansor and Banser commanders the ability to significantly increase the frequency of violence in the areas in which they were active and possessed this delegated authority. Moreover, it provided an additional avenue through which civilians could eliminate local political competition.

Civilian militia were also heavily involved in the execution of detainees in East Java. Most accounts of the killings in East Java follow a similar pattern. A truck would either pick up a group of civilian militia members – usually Ansor or Banser, or these militia would walk to a pre-determined location. A group of “communists” would either be waiting, bound and guarded by the military, or would arrive soon after by truck. An executioner from Rengen district recalled they “were called up whenever there was an execution scheduled. Usually it was at night after the [evening] prayer. There was a schedule, along with the name of the victims, which was transferred from the District Office to the District Military Command (Kurniawan et al. 2015:37). These executions typically occurred in locations away from public view and in which disposing many bodies could be done relatively easily. In the area around Kediri this was most often the Brantas River, especially for the first several weeks of mass executions. The river became so overwhelmed with corpses that people became afraid to bathe or eat fish from the river for fear of finding human remains (Sulistyo 1997:206).

Lack of intelligence capacity by the Brawijaya division increased levels of violence by incentivizing the army to turn to the civilian elites for intelligence on PKI leaders and activists. This provided them the opportunity to eliminate its local political opponents, and in doing so, expand the scope of those targeted to include many people with few, if any, ties to communist leadership. Reflecting on some of the detainees that were later executed in Srebet village in Sumbersuko district, a local resident recalled: “Many residents who were not actually in the PKI were killed […] Many of them even thought that PKI was an abbreviation for ‘Indonesian Kiai Party’” (Kurniawan et al. 2015:32). By December, this practice or targeting non-communists had extended to include not just individuals with peripheral ties to the PKI, but also supporters of the nationalist party (Fealy and McGregor 2012:126). Together, these factors led to similar levels of violence – the combination of arrests and killings – in East Java as occurred in Central Java.

**Rates of Killing**

While the frequency of violence in East Java is similar to that of Central Java, East Java had significantly higher rates of killing relative to detentions. Like Central Java, a lack of intelligence capacity led to an inability to screen detainees, encouraging greater levels of lethal violence through torture and misidentification. Also like Central Java, the logistical problem of caring for such a large numbers of prisoners incentivized security forces to use mass executions as a strategy to reduce the prison

\(^{22}\) “Muhammad” interview by Vanessa Hearman, Feb 2009, Bangil. Cited in Hearman 2012:119
population. However, in East Java the strength of civilian elites was such that they at times used the anti-communist campaign to move against their own opponents. In some areas of East Java in which there were pre-existing and effective militia, these militia performed waves of killing outside the control of the Army, leading to the killing of those that may otherwise have been imprisoned or released. In addition, civilian elites occasionally pressured local army commanders to escalate rates of killing in the areas under their control. Taken together, these factors led to higher rates of killing in East Java than Central Java or West Java.

Information and Screening

Like Central Java, the massive influx of detainees that resulted from outsourcing intelligence collection to civilian organizations quickly stretched the local prison system beyond its capacity, leading to a proliferation of temporary prisons throughout East Java. At Kaliosok prison in Surabaya, for example, rooms intended to house 25 prisoners were now occupied by some 50-60 detainees (Hearman 2012:104). As it was across Java, the Army was tasked with categorizing these prisoners into three categories, with only one category being slated for execution. The sheer number of detainees, combined with low intelligence gathering capacity, made this an impossible task for the Brajaya to do unilaterally. This intelligence shortcoming led to a combination of outsourcing intelligence further to civilians and torture to assess the role of detainees in the September 30th Movement.

The East Javanese screening system had to rely on civilians to a similar extent as Central Java. Given the lack of reliable information on detainees, it was often necessary to recruit local civilian actors to assess guilt. In Surabaya, for instance, the local screening team was led by a university dean from the faculty of shipping (Hearman 2012:102). In Kediri inmates were screened by a combination of NU and military personnel (Ibid:121). At times, this screening process could occur directly in the field, with organizational or militia leaders having final say as to who on a list was sufficiently communist to warrant execution. The Army would frequently choose the most ardent anti-communist civilians for this task: ensuring the screening team would classify many as being strongly communist even if they had few ties to the party. By the end of November, orders had been issued to use civilian broadly for such screening. A large number of inmates were also tortured during interrogation sessions in East Java (see Roosa 2008). This not only led to false confessions leading to execution in a direct sense, but also for detainees to implicate others.

Caring for Detainees

Like Central Java, food shortages were a ubiquitous problem in the East Java prison system, and prisoners often faced starvation conditions. Like the rest of Indonesia, East Java was in the midst of a severe food crisis prior to the September 30th Movement, and skyrocketing inflation incentivized rice hoarding and prevented the easy access of foodstuffs. Meals in prisons such as Kaliosok consisted of two teak-leaves of rice and a bowl of cabbage soup per day. Detainees were sometimes able to supplement their rations with parcels provided by friends or family members, provided they were not stolen by prison guards. In a remarkable show of solidarity, political prisoners often divided outside rations, sharing with those who had no outside sources to rely on. Still, under these conditions many died of starvation or disease in Kaliosok and other prisons across the province (Hearman 2012:105).

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23 Radiogram T. 702/1965 directed to Kodim 0818-0825 and 0831 on 23 November 1965, Daftar Chekking Pelaksanaan Surat-Surat Skorem 083, “G30S/PKI tahun 1965” No. Inventaris 316-a, Arsip Komando Daerah Militer V/ Brawijaya, Indonesia, cited by Leksana 2020:18. Note also that these screening teams were a feature of violence in Central Java (Hammer 2013)
The sheer number of political prisoners incentivized first local commands, and then the Brawijaya command as a whole, to rely on mass executions to solve the problem of feeding the detainee population. On October 17, for example, an officer with Kodim 0809 at Kediri, Lieutenant-Colonel Mukadji, convened a meeting in which to discuss the detainee problem. At the time, the Kodim had no money with which to feed the detainee population, nor could this money come easily from the Army’s local civilian allies in NU. According to Syafii Soleiman, the NU Chairman for Kediri at that time, NU had no money and could barely feed its own poor members. At the meeting the decision was made that the most practical means of overcoming the issue of feeding detainees was to execute large numbers of them en-masse. Like the process described in the previous section, the Army removed large numbers of political prisoners from detention centers during the night, brought them by truck to an isolated location, and either killed them themselves or turned them over to Ansor and Banser groups to be slaughtered. The problems faced by the Army in feeding detainees was also noted by the American Embassy in Jakarta. One air gram states that “[m]any provinces appear to be successfully meeting this problem by executing their PKI prisoners, or by killing them before they are captured, a task in which Moslem youth groups are providing assistance.” By October 1966 at least some of the regional commands (Korem) stopped receiving maintenance funds for prisoners entirely, placing the burden of their care on friends and relatives, lest the prisoners starve.

The need to rely on mass executions is directly tied to the Army’s decision to outsource intelligence collection to civilian organizations. As I have shown above, the Army’s reliance on denunciations led to huge increases in the number of individuals arrested by the Army. It was this large number of detainees that originally incentivized the use of mass executions by the Army. Had the initial detainee population been smaller, there would have been less difficulty in feeding the new prison population, and as such, less of an incentive to rely upon executions.

Civilian Elites

In East Java, civilian elites were able to further increase rates of killing. They did this by directing militia to kill opponents unilaterally, and by pressuring local commanders to use mass executions. These increased rates of killing appear to be most prominent in areas in which NU was both strong and had intense competition with the communist party in the years prior to violence.

Civilian elites occasionally directed militia to move unilaterally against their local opponents, leading to higher rates of killing in areas in which these unilateral attacks occurred. Lacking connections to the official security apparatus and their network of detention centers, these unilateral attacks were more likely to take lethal forms than the repressive violence campaign orchestrated by the Army writ large. Unilateral militia attacks were more likely to occur when civilian militia were capable of challenging Army dominance in a locale and when local civilian elites had intense anxiety about future power balances.

Militia commanders were able to exercise high degrees of autonomy in civilian-led operations, being able to decide in the field who was to be targeted, and who amongst those targets was sufficiently communist so as to warrant execution. An example of this in-field decision making is provided by Sulistyo, in describing the actions of an Ansor unit in Kediri: “They stopped the buses and asked the

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passengers to declare themselves Muslims or not. If the answer was yes, then the gang asked them to recite the syahadat. Rarely could someone not recite this sentence; if this happened, he was dragged out of the bus and finished right there” (Sulistyo 1997:200). Similar direct, lethal attacks occurred in areas such as Mojojerto and Madura – both areas in which NU was physically strong and had been in intense competition with the PKI (“Report from East Java” 1986:141).27

At times, the relative strength of civilian elites allowed them to pressure local commanders to raise rates of execution. In the aforementioned case of Kediri, there were few reliable troops available with which to conduct operations against the PKI, leading the military to rely upon the local NU branch for intelligence and manpower (see also Sudjatmiko 1992:205-206). There, the influence of Kiai such as Mahrus Aly of Lirboyo was evidently important enough that military and civilian planners of a mass rally in Kediri felt compelled to seek his blessing before orchestrating violence (Sulistyo 1997:180). Following the rally, it was not the local military command, but instead Syafii Soleiman the local NU chairman, that advocated for the mass execution of detainees. Soleiman was well positioned to make this demand: Lirboyo Pesantren was embedded in a dense network of pesantren, each with dedicated Banser units, which had developed a courier system to rapidly coordinate the deployment of Banser units from within Kediri regency and neighbouring ones such as Jombang.28 Kediri is often reported as having among the highest levels of violence in East Java at this time, and the many reports of mass executions there suggest that it likely had among the highest rates of killing in the province (see Sulistyo 1997:186-214; Rochijat 1985; Chandra 2017:1067).

Regional variations in levels of violence support the argument that it was civilian elites that further increased rates of killing in East Java compared to Central Java. In a study of population change due to politicide at the regency level, Siddharth Chandra has found that the regencies with the greatest population losses were most frequently those in which NU was strong (2017:1069-1072). Crucially, this appears to be the case regardless of PKI strength. This suggests that levels of violence were in large part driven by the actions of civilian organizations, rather than number of potential communist party leaders and activists in a given location. Moreover, most of the regencies in which there are reports of unilateral militia attacks are also those with some of the highest levels of population loss. Actions in which civilian militia clashed with local security forces over their use of violence are reported in Kediri, Madura, Jombang, and the regencies neighbouring Surabaya – including the aforementioned Mojokerto (see “Report from East Java” 1986; Sulistyo 1997:188-200; Hearman 2012:111-112). Kediri city, for example, had the highest levels of population loss of any city of regency in the province, while all Madurese regencies, Mojokerto, and Jombang also had significant population declines (Chandra 2017:1067). Given that militia in these regencies were not initially able to access detention centers, and is likely that a significant portion of this population loss was due to lethal violence. Also, in many of these regencies there were reported clashes between militia and professional security forces, making it likely that this increased violence happened against the preferences of local commanders. Finally, all of these areas feature prominently in anecdotal reports of mass executions and displays of human remains (see Rochijat 1985; “Report from East Java” 1986; “Anonymous” 1990; Young 1990; Sudjatmiko 1992; Sunyoto et al. 1996; Sulistyo 1997; Kuniawan et al. 2015; Hearman 2012). All together, the scale of violence in East Java can be found in Table 5.2:

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27 Confidential interview 041 with former Pemuda Rakyat member by author, Mojokerto, May 2016
28 Confidential interview 034 with witness and Kiai by author, Jombang, April 2016.
Table 5.2: Magnitude of Politicide in East Java

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number detained</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Killed</td>
<td>180,000-200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number targeted (killed + detained)</td>
<td>205,000-225,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Total Adult Population (aged 15+)</td>
<td>12,875,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of PKI voters in 1957</td>
<td>2,704,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKI Vote Share</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of PKI pool in detention</td>
<td>.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of PKI pool killed</td>
<td>7.579-8.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total adult pop in detention</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total adult pop killed</td>
<td>1.59-1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total adult pop targeted</td>
<td>1.784-1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% PKI pool targeted</td>
<td>8.504-9.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing:Detention Ratio</td>
<td>8:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Mass violence in East Java largely concluded by February or March 1966. By the end of December 1965, Sunarijadi issued instructions forbidding civilians to assist in the annihilation of September 30th Movement elements, and by the end of January proclaimed that civilians who do not obey the authorities would be summarily shot by the Army (Crouch 1978:154). The extent to which these orders were carried out is unknown, but by this time it was believed that the vast majority of hard-core communists in the province had already been executed (Fealy and McGregor 2012:125). Like Central Java, most arrests and execution without detention appear to have stopped by March 1966 following the ascension of Suharto. However, tensions between Ansor, the PNI, and the Army continued to lead to occasional violent clashes in East Java. These types of clashes only ended in June 1966 when Major General Soemitro became the new regional commander for East Java (Fealy and McGregor 2012:126-128). With close links to both NU and the PNI, Soemitro could sufficiently bridge the differences between the remaining political forces to stabilize the situation.

Mass Violence in East Java

29 The 1961 census does not provide an internal breakdown of the aged 15-24 category (see Widjojo 1970). This estimate is derived from the total population of East Java, minus the percentage of this number that is under 15 (this percentage is for Java as a whole, and thus may not be exact for East Java specifically).
Mass Violence in East Java followed a more complex pattern than Central and West Java, with two distinct phases. During the first phase, lasting until approximately mid-November, the initiative to commit politicide was passed down to local commanders. In areas in which the local commander moved against the PKI, they had an incentive to turn to civilian elites to provide the necessary intelligence and manpower to implement mass violence at the local level. In areas in which civilian elites were strong, and in which local commanders were unwilling to move against the PKI they occasionally took initiative themselves. In the second phase, the Brawijaya command began to coordinate mass violence in the province. However, the Brawijaya still had to rely upon civilians for intelligence and manpower like during the first phase, only now the anti-communist campaign spread wider across the province, and civilian militia were brought more fully – albeit incompletely - under the umbrella of the Brawijaya Division.

Relying upon civilian elites for intelligence allowed them to use denunciations as a means of eliminating personal and organizational rivals, and in doing so, expand the frequency of violence in East Java. In doing so, they expanded the scope of violence to include not only communist leaders and activists, but also those with no or only tenuous links to the party. Indeed, by December, this practice or targeting non-communists had extended to include not just individuals with peripheral ties to the PKI, but also supporters of the nationalist party (Fealy and McGregor 2012:126). Regional variations in population change support this argument: the best predictor of population decline was not the size of the communist party (measured by electoral support) – the group ostensibly targeted for violence – but the size of NU – the Army’s chief civilian ally in East Java (Chandra 2017:1066-1072).

Civilian actions also greatly increased rates of killing relative to detention in East Java. This occurred through three pathways. First, like Central Java, the huge influx of detainees caused by outsourcing intelligence provision to civilians exceeded the ability of the Brawijaya Division to house and feed them. This created an incentive to utilize mass executions as a means of easing the burden of caring for prisoners. Second, a lack of information on detainees incentivized further outsourcing of intelligence to civilians to classify detainees. Relying on known anti-communists, this tended to lead to more civilians being classified as strongly communist. Moreover, the lack of information incentivized torture, leading to false confessions and, subsequently, increased executions. Third, in areas in which civilian elites had experienced past conflict with the PKI and access to organized militia, they occasionally used lethal violence unilaterally against their local political opponents. Lacking access to state detention facilities, these militia attacks were more likely to lead to killing than imprisonment. These unilateral killings were most common in October and early November 1965, before the Brawijaya Division began to coordinate the campaign of repressive violence throughout East Java. These killings were also most common in areas in which NU was strong and in which there had been clashes between NU and the PKI. At times, local NU leaders were also able to encourage mass executions, further raising rates of killing. For these reasons, East Java had extremely high rates of killing, even if the relative magnitude of repressive violence was virtually the same as Central Java.
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